Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELFAS 00021 042058Z

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 620
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

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FEBRUARY 4TH., 1974.

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT UK (NI) EI
SUBJECT: IRISH AND NI GOVTS MEET ON IMPLEMENTING SUNNINGDALE

SUMMARY: MINISTERS OF IRISH GOVERNMENT AND NI EXECUTIVE MET IN NORTH AT HILLSBOROUGH FEB 1, IN PREVIEW OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND, TO REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION OF SUNNINGDALE. IN MEDIA APPEARANCES AFTERS FAULKNER MADE IT CLEAR FORMAL RATIFICATION CONFERENCE MUST AWAIT CLARIFICATION OF IRISH DECLARATION ON NI STATUS, REPORT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION, AND REPORT ON FUNCTIONS OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND. THIS IN PRACTICE MEANS CONFERENCE CANNOT BE HELD UNTIL MARCH. BUT FAULKNER EMPHASIZED GOOD WHICH HAD ALREADY COME FROM BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN IRISH AND NORTHERN IRELAND GOVERNMENT. LOYALIST PROTESTS AGAINST MEETING WERE ANGUISHED BUT INEFFECTIVE. MEETING RESTORE MOMENTUM OF SUNNINGDALE AND GIVE IMPRESSION THAT FORMAL RATIFICATION CONFERENCE WILL INDEED GO AHEAD SOON, UNLESS BOLAND CASE CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR GOI OR TWO GOVTS CANNOT AGREE ON FUGITIVE TERRORIST ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. LEADING MEMBERS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE AND IRISH
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PAGE 02 BELFAS 00021 042058Z

GOVERNMENT MET FEBRUARY 1 AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, HILLSBOROUGH,

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

COUNTY DOWN, TO REVIEW PROGRESS TOWARDS FORMAL RATIFICATION
OF SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT. OFFICIAL STATEMENT FOLLOWING MEETING
SAID THEY DISCUSSED "ALL THE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF THAT AGREEMENT
- THE DECLARATIONS ON THE STATUS OF NORTHERN IRELAND: THE
PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT ,
HUMAN RIGHTS AND LAW AND ORDER. IT WAS AGREED THAT SATISFACTORY
PROGESS WAS BEING MADE AND THAT FURTHER MEETINGS SHOULD BE HELD
AT MINISTERIAL AND OFFICIAL LEVEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO CARRY
FORWARD THOSE STUDIES WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE FINAL
STAGE OF THE CONFERENCE."

2. EACH SIDE WAS REPRESENTED BY A TOTAL OF EIGHT MINISTERS
AS WELL AS SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN SCENARIO WHICH MIGHT BE
TAKEN AS PREVIEW OF FORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND. NI EXECUTIVE WAS LED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
FAULKNER AND INCLUDED HIS DEPUTY GERRY FITT, FINANCE MINISTER
HERBERT KIRK, ENVIRONMENT MINISTER ROY BRADFORD. LAW REFORM
MEMBER OLIVER NAPIER, AGRICULTURE MINISTER LESLIE MORRELL,
COMMERCE MINISTER JOHN HUME, AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
MINISTER PADDY DEVLIN.

3. IN PRESS CONFERENCE AND TV APPEARANCES SAME EVENING FAULKNER
EMPHASIZED THREE MATTERS HAD TO BE CLEARED UP BEFORE SUNNINGDALE
COULD BE FORMALLY RATIFIED:
A. "CLARIFICATION OF GOI'S SUNNINGDALE DECLARATION ON
RECOGNITION OF STATUS OF NI - FAULKNER, NOTHING THAT TAOSEACH
HAD CONFIRMED HIS POSITION ON STATUS AT MEETING, SAID THAT HE
EXPECTS PUBLIC STATEMENT BY COSGRAVE ONCE POSSIBLE BOLAND
APPEAL OF HIGH COURT'S REJECTION OF HIS CONSTITUIONAL
CHALLENGE TO DECLARATION IS NO LONGER SUB JUDICE. FAULKNER
SAID HE EXPECTS SIMPLE REAFFIRMATION OF SUNNINGDALE. HE
ARGUED THAT MEETING REPRESENTED FURTHER TACIT IRISH RECOGNITION
OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS OF NORTH, AND THAT RELATIONS
BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES ARE BETTER THAN SINCE HE HAS BEEN A
MINISTER (1956).
B. REPORT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION ON WAYS OF BRINGING
FUGITIVE OFFENDERS TO JUSTICE - COMMISSION REPORTEDLY HAS
SCHEDULED MEETING THIS WEEK IN WHICH IT WILL REVIEW STUDIES
PREPARED FOR IT BY TEAMS OF EXPERTS AN INTERIM REPORT AT
LEAST IS EXPECTED SOON THEREAFTER.
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PAGE 03 BELFAS 00021 042058Z

C. REPORT ON FUNCTIONS OF COUNCIL OF IRELAND - FAULKNER SAID
FUNCTIONS ARE GENERALLY AGREED BETWEEN NI AND IRISH GOVERNMENTS,
BUT INTER-GOVERNMENT COMMITTEES WILL NEED ABOUT A MONTH TO WORK
OUT THE DETAILS.

4. FAULKNER SAID BENEFITS OF SUNNINGDALE ARE ALREADY BEING
FELT IN INCREASED COOPERATION BETWEEN GARDAI AND RUC, AND THAT
BOTH SIDES HAD EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF DEALING EFFECTIVELY

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

WITH TERRORISTS. HE WOULD BE REPORTING ON SECURITY ASPECTS OF MEETING TO NORTHERN IRELAND SECRETARY PY.

5. ALTHOUGH MEETING WAS HERALDED IN FEBRUARY 1 MORNING NEWSPAPERS, LOYALIST PROTESTS WERE MINIMAL - FEWER THAN ONE THOUSAND WORKERS DOWNED TOOLS, AND ONLY ONE MAN SHOWED UP TO TOWN SQUARE OF HILLSBOROUGH. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL ACCUSED FAULKNER OF SELLING BIRTHRIGHT OF LOYALIST AND UNIONIST PEOPLE, AND PROTESTED AGAINST USE OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FORMER RESIDENCE OF GOVERNORS OF NORTHERN IRELAND, AS 22 REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE CENTER FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE UNION, " (UNIONIST) NEWS LETTER LEADER FEBRUARY 'ALSO FOUND LOCATION OF MEETING PARTICULARLY HARD TO SWALLOW.'

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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